

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /005 W

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FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2364

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FOR AF/ C SIEFKEN

E. O. 11652 N/ A

TAGS: SWEL, RW

SUBJ: DR. BARRY SIMMONS

1. I HAVE JUST RECEIVED COPY OF LETTER OF MARCH 12 FROM DR. SIMMONS TO AMBASSADOR NKUNDABAGENZI SEEKING HIS ASSSITANCE FOR EXPEDITIOUS POSITIVE GOR RESPONSE TO HIS PROPOSITION VISIT RWANDA THIS SUMMER; I ALSO HAVE LETTER DATED MARCH 7 FROM MR. HILL BERMONT, GEORGIA CENTER FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA, ATHENS EXPRESSING INTEREST IN SENDING FILM CREW TO ACCOMPANY DR. SIMMONS TO MAKE DOCUMENTARY ON HIS WORK FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES. BERMONT SENT COPY OF LETTER HE ALSO SENT TO NKUNDABAGENZI.

2. YOU WILL RECALL WHEN I TALKED TO SIMMONS LATE JANUARY I PROMISED TO EXPLORE THIS MATTER WHEN I GOT BACK. AND AS SIMMONS HAD BROACHED TO ME

QUESTION OF FREE AIRLIFT FOR HIS 1500 LBS. OR SO OF EQUIPMENT, I TOLD HIM WHILE I COULD DO NOTHING ABOUT AMERICAN CARRIERS, I WOULD BE GLAD INQUIRE OF SABENA WHETHER THEY MIGHT CARRY EQUIPMENT FREE FROM BRUSSELS TO KIGALI ON HUMANI-TARIAN AND CHARITABLE GROUNDS OR AS " EMERGENCY RELIEF" CARGO AS SIMMONS SUGGESTED WAS ALLOWABLE BY INTERNATIONAL AIR CARRIER RULES.

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3. EMBASSY HAS BEEN UNABLE PROPERLY EXPLORE THIS MATTER WITH APPROPRIATE GOR OFFICIALS ON ACCOUNT THEIR PREOCCUPATION WITH RECENT TROUBLES. WE HAVE, HOWEVER, TAKEN INFORMAL SOUNDINGS IN MEDICAL AND MISSIONARY CIRCLES.

4. OUR REGRETFUL CONCLUSION IS THAT SIMMONS' PROJECT IS SIMPLY NOT FEASIBLE AT THIS TIME FOR NUMBER OF REASONS: (A) LACK OF WILLINGNESS OR ABILITY GIVE REQUIRED SUPPORT ON PART OF BELGIAN MEDICAL TECHNICAL ADVISERS OR MISSIONARIES; (B) POLITICAL UNCERTAINTY AND TENSION ATTENDANT ON ETHNIC RIVALRIES; (C) ADMINISTRATIVE DISORGANIZATION RESULTING FOR JUST- ANNOUNCED CIVIL SERVICE RESHUFFLE; (D) EMBASSY' S DETERMINATION IT IS HIGHLY IMPROBABLE RWANDANS WOULD BE ABLE FURNISH ENGLISH- SPEAKING ASSISTANTS FOR DR. SIMMONS WHO COULD LATER CARRY ON HIS WORK TO SOME DEGREE; (E) GRAVE UNCERTAINTY WITH RESPECT GOR ABILITY OR WILLINGNESS SUPPLY EVEN MINIMAL HOUSING AND LOGISTIC SUPPORT, REQUIREMENT FOR WHICH WOULD BE COMPOUNDED IN CASE TV CAMERAMEN ALSO CAME; AND (F) FACT THAT SABENA LOCAL MANAGER, IN ANSWER MY INQUIRY MADE AS PROMISED, CATEGORICALLY ASSERTED THERE WAS " ABSOLUTELY NO CHANCE" FOR FREE TRANSPORT OF EQUIPMENT FROM BELGIUM VIA SABENA.

5. UNLESS DEPARTMENT PERCEIVES OBJECTION, THEREFORE, EMBASSY RECOMMENDS YOU SOON CONVEY TO DR. SIMMONS AND MR. BERMONT OUR JUDGMENT THAT PROSPECTS FOR THEIR FRUITFUL ACTIVITY IN RWANDA THIS YEAR ARE NOT BRIGHT. EMBASSY PARTICULARLY REGRETS THIS JUDGMENT ON ACCOUNT OF DR. SIMMONS' SELFLESS MOTIVATION AND REALIZATION HOW VERY VALUABLE HIS KIND OF ACTIVITY COULD BE IN A COUNTRY LIKE RWANDA. EMBASSY WOULD HOPE DEPARTMENT WOULD CONVEY THESE SENTIMENTS AND DEPARTMENT' S OWN APPRECIATION TO GENTLEMEN CONCERNED.

6. IN EXTREMELY UNLIKELY EVENT DEMARCHES MADE TO AMBASSADOR NKUNDABAGENZI SHOULD EVOKE EARLY AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SEEMINGLY FAVORABLE GOR RESPONSE AND PROMISES OF

COOPERATION, AND SHOULD SIMMONS AND BERMONT STILL
BE INTERESTED, EMBASSY WOULD OF COURSE BE GLAD
ASSIST IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE AND WOULD CERTAINLY
WELCOME THEM TO RWANDA. WE WOULD STILL STRONGLY
FEAR, HOWEVER, THAT RESULTS WOULD BE DISAPPOINTING.
DECONTROL FOLLOWING RECEIPT.
CORRIGAN

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